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**Resource Challenges and Innovative Changes of the Local
Transportation System**

Pennsylvania Senate Transportation Committee

October 7, 2015

Good morning, Chairman Rafferty and members of the Senate
Transportation Committee.

My name is Ellen McLean, and I am the CEO of Port Authority of Allegheny
County.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to speak to you today.

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I'd like to start my remarks by outlining some of the innovations that we're
now using.

Over the last few years, Port Authority has used innovation and technology
to help us deliver better service, more efficiently and effectively meet
demands, and is currently looking at ways in which we can use data to make
decisions to increase ridership and improve our system overall.

Last fall, Port Authority began installing technology in our buses that enables
users to track the location of our buses in real-time from their computers
and smartphones.

After training our operators and getting some of the kinks out of the system,
which we call TrueTime, our on-time performance has improved over the last
two years and is steadily improving.

Not only has TrueTime made details about our transit service more
accessible to riders, the technology means less time spent having to wait out
in the cold for a bus.

The same way TrueTime has made our system more predictable, the use of
data analysis when determining the schedule has made the system more
efficient and easier to use.

By collecting and analyzing ridership statistics, we have been able to amend our schedules -- adding or subtracting the frequency at which buses arrive at select stops -- to meet demand.

This analysis decreased the number of overcrowded bus trips by nearly 10 percent from January to July 2015 over the same time period in 2014.

Currently, we are working with a team of engineers from Carnegie Mellon University to optimize bus movement through congested city corridors.

The Scalable Urban Traffic Control program, also known as Surtrac, places adaptive traffic signals at high-impact intersections that communicate with buses to ease congestion by changing the signals depending on the real-time conditions.

Initial studies show vehicles have spent 40 percent less time idling, reducing traffic and cutting emissions pollution by 20 percent.

Additional funding for innovation and technology could only serve to make our system better, more efficient and to improve our system overall.

I look forward to being involved in those discussions during any future workgroups regarding this subject.

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I'll shift now to discuss how Port Authority manages service needs that outweigh available resources. This is very timely as we're experiencing wave after wave of service requests from all areas of Allegheny County.

Act 89 was a tremendous achievement for transportation programs and truly stabilized our system after years of service reductions and uncertainty.

While some of the transit service that was cut in years past helped to make our system more efficient and productive, some has left voids where demand for public transportation options continues today.

We're now hearing from those communities and they are clearly expressing the continuing demand for our services. Community leaders are now regularly attending our Board meetings to explain these needs and residents are constantly detailing how these voids – these "transit deserts" – are tremendous hardships.

There's clearly an unmet demand for public transportation in Allegheny County. And, despite the tremendous benefits of Act 89, there's simply not enough funding available to meet all of these demands.

In June, Port Authority's Board adopted an improved Service Guidelines process to bring clarity and transparency to the process of deciding how to spend available service dollars.

Now, communities and organizations desiring additional service may submit this request and know that the proposal will be considered by the Authority and weighed against other requests.

Our evaluation process assigns scores for each proposal in the categories of efficiency, effectiveness and equity.

The agency then recommends, through an annual report, service changes that the Board may consider during its fiscal budget process.

So, while we cannot meet everyone's transit needs due to cost, we have taken specific steps to be open about our decisions and provide as much information as possible about the annual recommendations.

Finally, on the matter of funding, the Allegheny Conference on Community Development, which I believe is scheduled to also testify today, recently has launched its Regional Transportation Alliance that will tackle the broader regional questions of how best to meet our most critical transportation needs in Western Pennsylvania.

I'm happy to answer any questions you may have at this time. Thank you for asking Port Authority to participate in today's hearing.

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Innovations at Port Authority

- Delivering better service
- More efficient
- More effective
- Use of data to increase ridership and improve system

TrueTime

- GPS technology on buses that allows riders to track the location of buses in real-time.
- Helped improve on-time performance
- Passengers spend less time waiting
- Waiting for the bus is no longer a guessing game
- Allows for more flexibility; less reliant on schedules

Data Analysis

- Track ridership patterns to develop more efficient bus scheduling.

- Decreased the number of overcrowded bus trips by nearly 10 percent.

Fewer overcrowded bus trips

Sum of Overcrowded* Bus Trips by Month
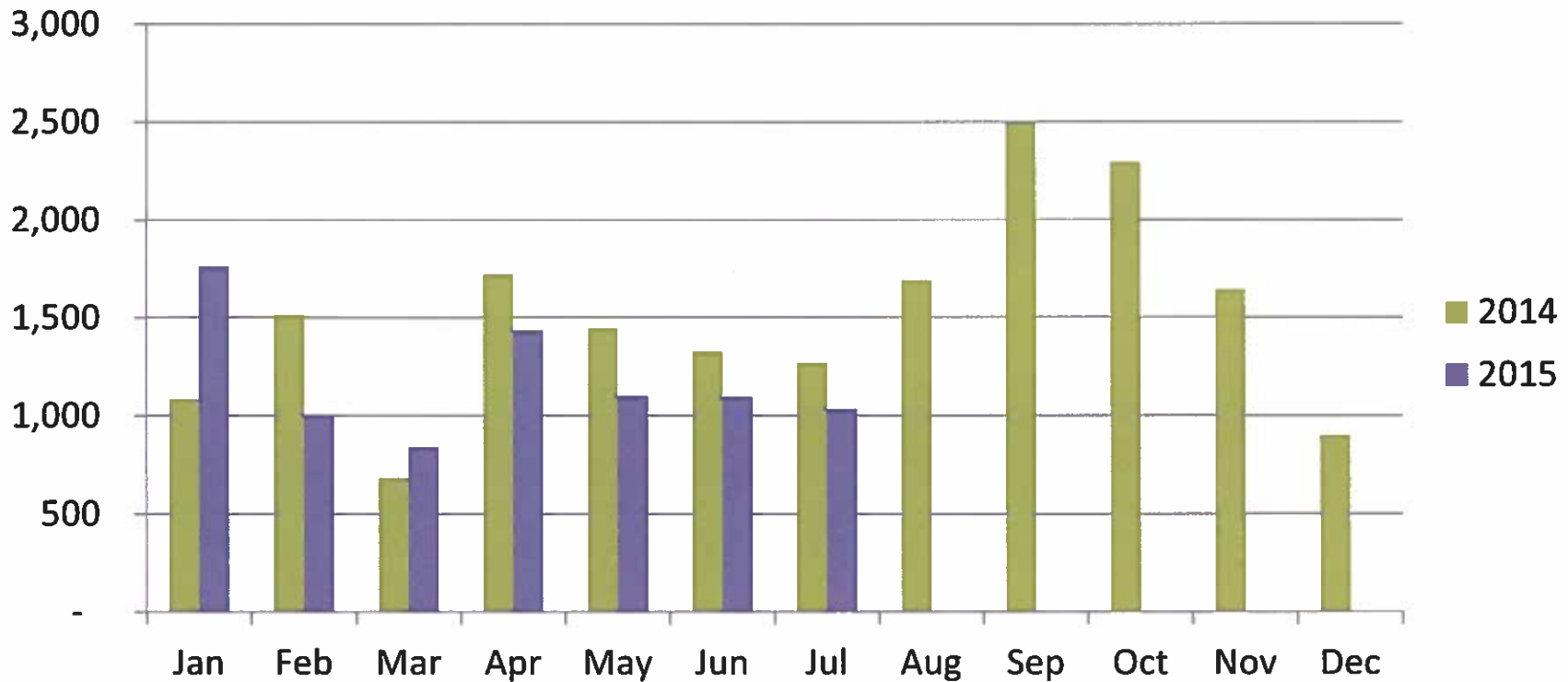
*Overcrowded is defined as a bus having more than 140 percent of riders compared to available seats. (40 seats = 56+ riders)

Scalable Urban Traffic Control program (SurTrac)

- Working with CMU to place state-of-the-art adaptive traffic signals at high-impact intersections to ease congestion.
- Configuring 75 buses with antennas and DSRC units to communicate with the SurTrac system
- Port Authority will analyze effects on bus routes' travel speed using TrueTime technology
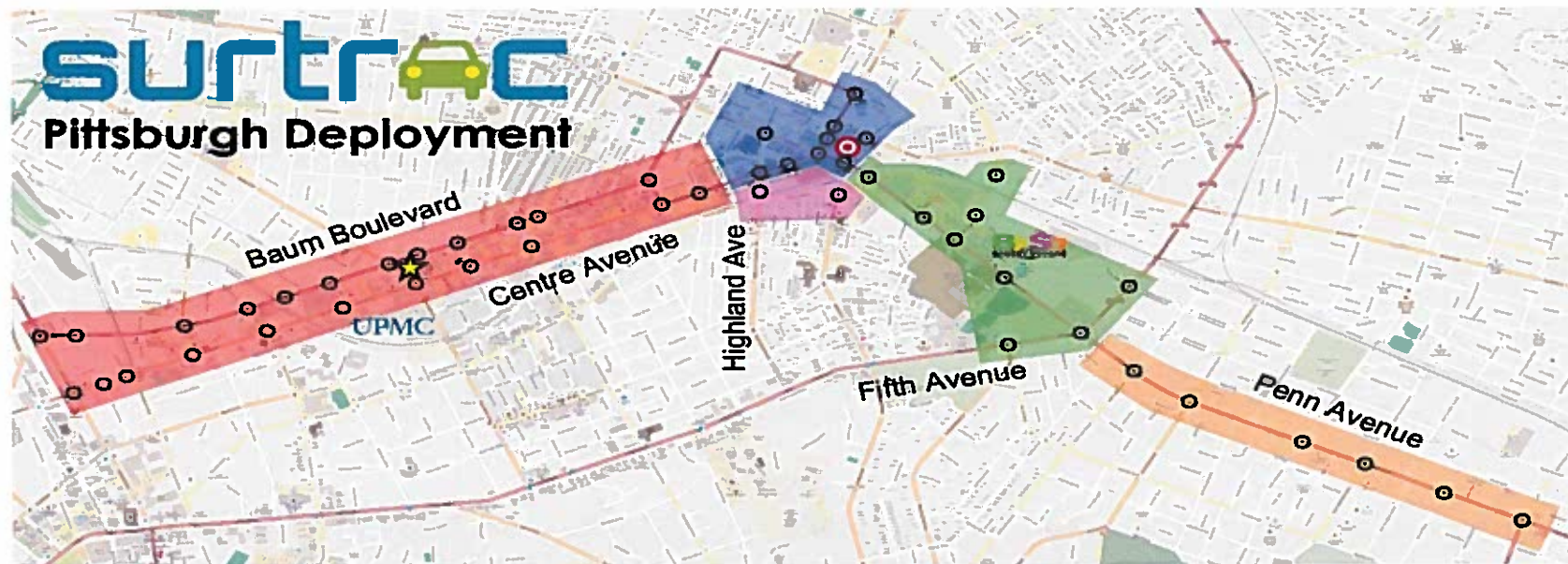
Service guidelines

- Requests for service must be <u>EQUITABLE</u> while remaining <u>EFFECTIVE</u> and <u>EFFICIENT</u>.

- Analyze U.S. Census Data to determine where the county's most vulnerable riders are located and make sure they're being served.

- Use internal data to ensure routes are efficient and effective.